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HINDRANCES TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

In our last, under the head of "Editor's Book Table," we briefly noticed the publication in pamphlet form, of an able address delivered by our esteemed friend and *collaborateur*, Professor Buckland, before the New York State Agricultural Society at its last Fair, entitled "Some of the hindrances and helps to the advancement of agriculture." We stated that we had a great mind to transfer the address bodily to our columns at some future time. To do this would perhaps be wearisome to that class of readers, a large one we fancy, who prefer to be fed like fledgelings, "little and often," instead of having much at once. We have therefore decided to break the lecture into fragments, and accordingly publish in this number the portion which treats of hindrances to the advancement of agriculture, for which we bespeak a thoughtful perusal.

"Orators and poets of all ages and countries have extolled the importance of Agriculture, and sung of the charms and beauties of rural life. As the first want of man is food, and the only supply the produce of the soil, the cultivation of the earth and the keeping of flocks and herds must have been coeval with the first fixed forms of human society, and the history of this necessary art may be justly regarded as the history of civilization, itself. Not only do we depend on the skill and industry of the husbandman for the staff of life,—“our daily bread,”—but also, in a great measure, for the raw material, as it is termed, which the manufacturing and ornamental arts of an ever-advancing civilization work up into the necessaries and adornments of social and domestic life.

If, therefore, agriculture be so ancient and indispensable, not only to the general well-being of society, but to the very physical existence of man, removed but a degree from the savage state, the question naturally arises in every reflective mind, acquainted with its general or particular history, How is it that this most valuable art has not kept pace with the other industries of life, but has gener-

ally been found lagging behind, and frequently exhibiting symptoms of a feeble and sickly existence? There have been laws and customs in most of the countries of the old world, affecting the acquisition, distribution, and management of landed property, that have done much, and unhappily in some cases yet continue, to impede the progress of a national agriculture, causes from which we, of the new world, are in great measure, or altogether, free. But the question naturally occurs, whether, under favorable circumstances, there is anything in the nature of agricultural pursuits, *per se*, that tends to render its improvement and progress comparatively slow? I think there is.

In the first place, in countries of the temperate zone, at least, it requires a whole year for the farmer to make a single experiment, and, as the art advances, much longer periods, as rotations of four, seven, or more years are involved, before safe conclusions can be drawn from well established data. If to this be added the differences of soil, even on the same farm, the variable character of the seasons, and the many substances now employed as manures, it will be at once apparent that agricultural experiments are, in their very nature, highly complicated, and the number that comes within the experience of the busiest and longest life, must be necessarily restricted. In most other industrial arts, experiments may be almost indefinitely multiplied within ordinary limits of time, and subjected to a series of rigid correctness, so that reliable results may, in most cases, be readily obtained.

Again: The isolated character of the farmer's life must necessarily tend, in some measure, to retard the progress of his art, as compared with those carried on in the populous centres of human industry. In cities and towns, merchants and manufacturers come in daily contact with one another; inquiry hence becomes stimulated, information rapidly and widely diffused, experiences compared; and whatever may occur to affect the interests of any particular branch of industry, those who pursue it can meet without delay, and take counsel in regard to their common welfare. Farmers, from